



Mark Barnard & Terrie Smith

\$2.99 U.S.
NOV 2001

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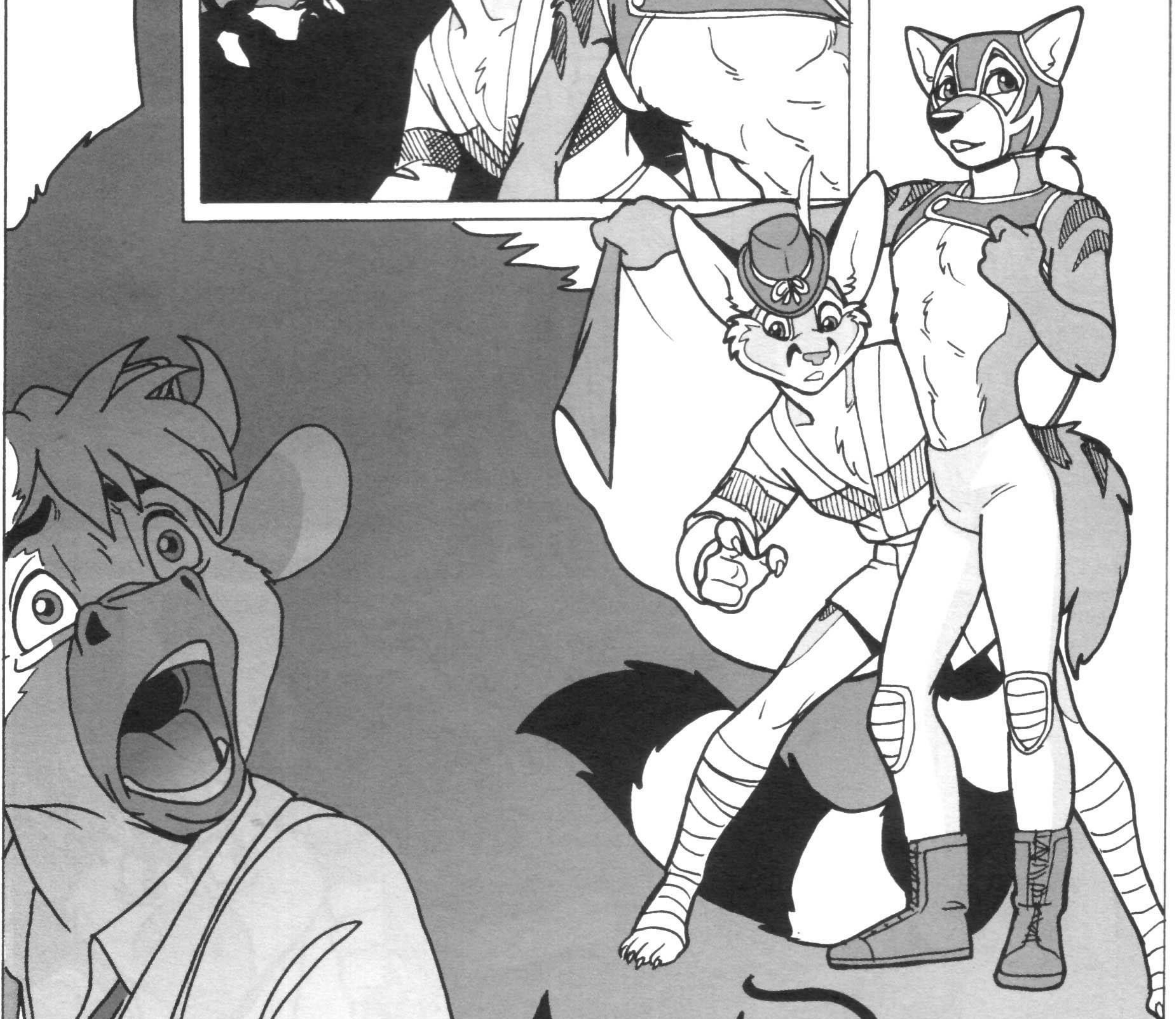


TERRIE SMITH

NO!



STORY:
MARK BARNARD
ART:
TERRIE SMITH
LETTERS:
GLEN WOOTEN
(ASSIST)



Atomic Dragon vs the X-Consters

PART 1: "ENTER THE DRAGON"

THE MOST PRESSING AT THE
MOMENT BEING WHAT'S FOR SUPPER.

THE UNIVERSE.
ENDLESS AND ENIGMATIC
- POSSESSED OF VAST,
UNFATHOMABLE SECRETS.

DINNER'S SERVED!
COME AND **GET** IT!

WELL, THIS IS NICE.
WHAT'RE WE HAVING?

TREAT?

A REAL DELIGHT! I SLAVED
OVER THIS FOR HOURS, SO I'M
SURE I GOT IT RIGHT THIS TIME!

YOU... DON'T
MEAN...?

WELL, THIS ONE ISN'T QUITE
AS... CRUSTY BLACK AS USUAL.

YEP!
MEATLOAF!

CHIRP?

UH-OH!

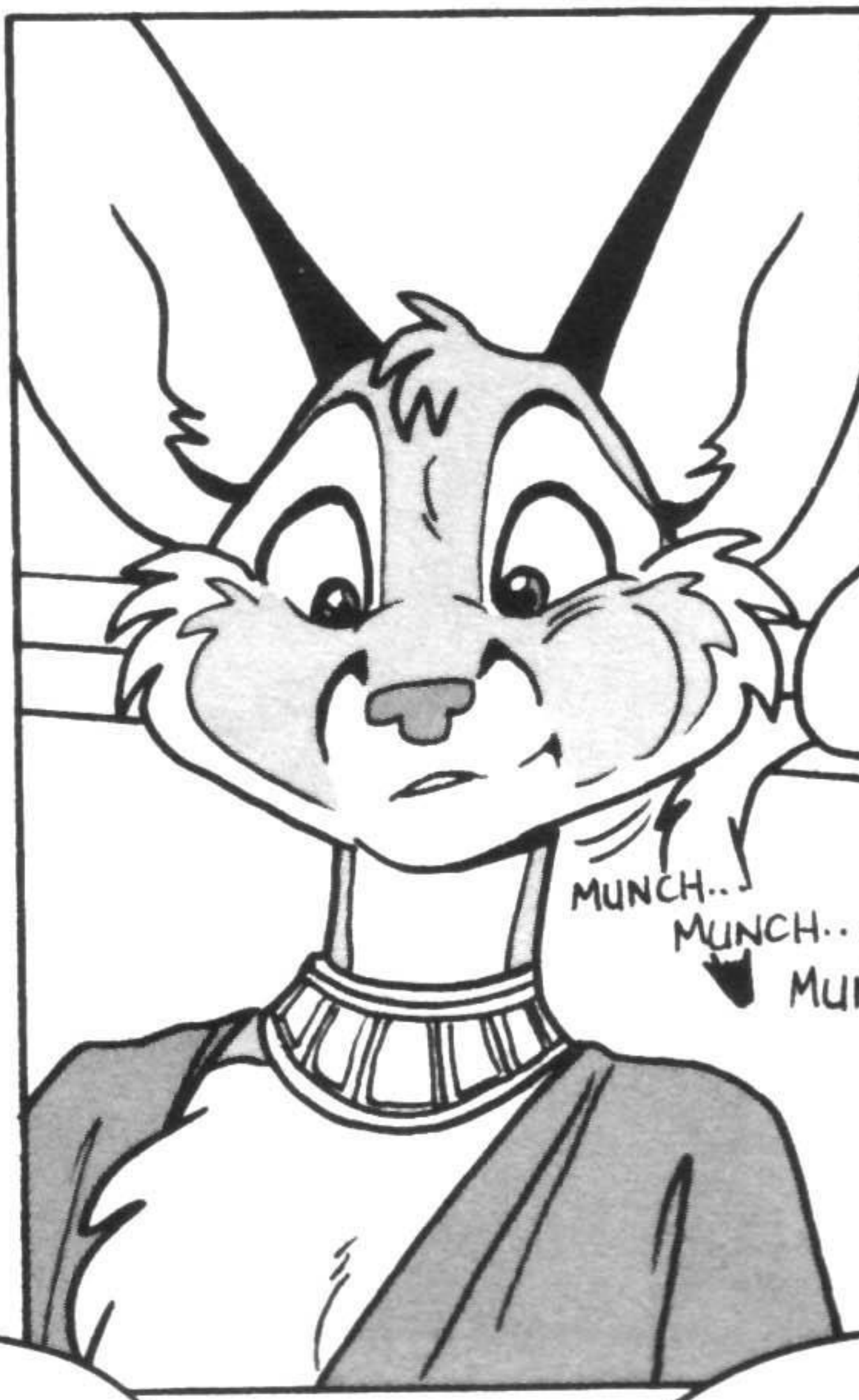
IT'S A NEW RECIPE!
SEE IF YOU CAN IDENTIFY
THE MAIN INGREDIENT!

KISSTHECHEF
I WORK
FOR TIPS

THAT'D BE
MEAT, RIGHT?

RIGHT?!

ERR... DEFINE
'MEAT'.





CHESTER HAD NEVER FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE CANINE'S INTEREST IN THE CHARISMATIC KING OF THE MASKED WRESTLERS. STILL, IF DECK **LIKED** THE MASTER OF ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE WRESTLING ACTION, WHO WAS CHESTER TO PROTEST? AFTER ALL, WRESTLING WAS JUST A GAME. EVERYONE KNEW THAT. WHAT POSSIBLE **HARM** COULD THERE BE IN INDULGING HIS PARTNER?

I JUST HOPE YOU APPRECIATE WHAT I HAD TO GO THROUGH TO GET THESE TICKETS!

<CHUCKLE> OH, I'M SURE I CAN FIND SOME LITTLE WAY TO PROPERLY THANK YOU.

IF NOT, I CAN MAKE A FEW SUGGESTIONS!

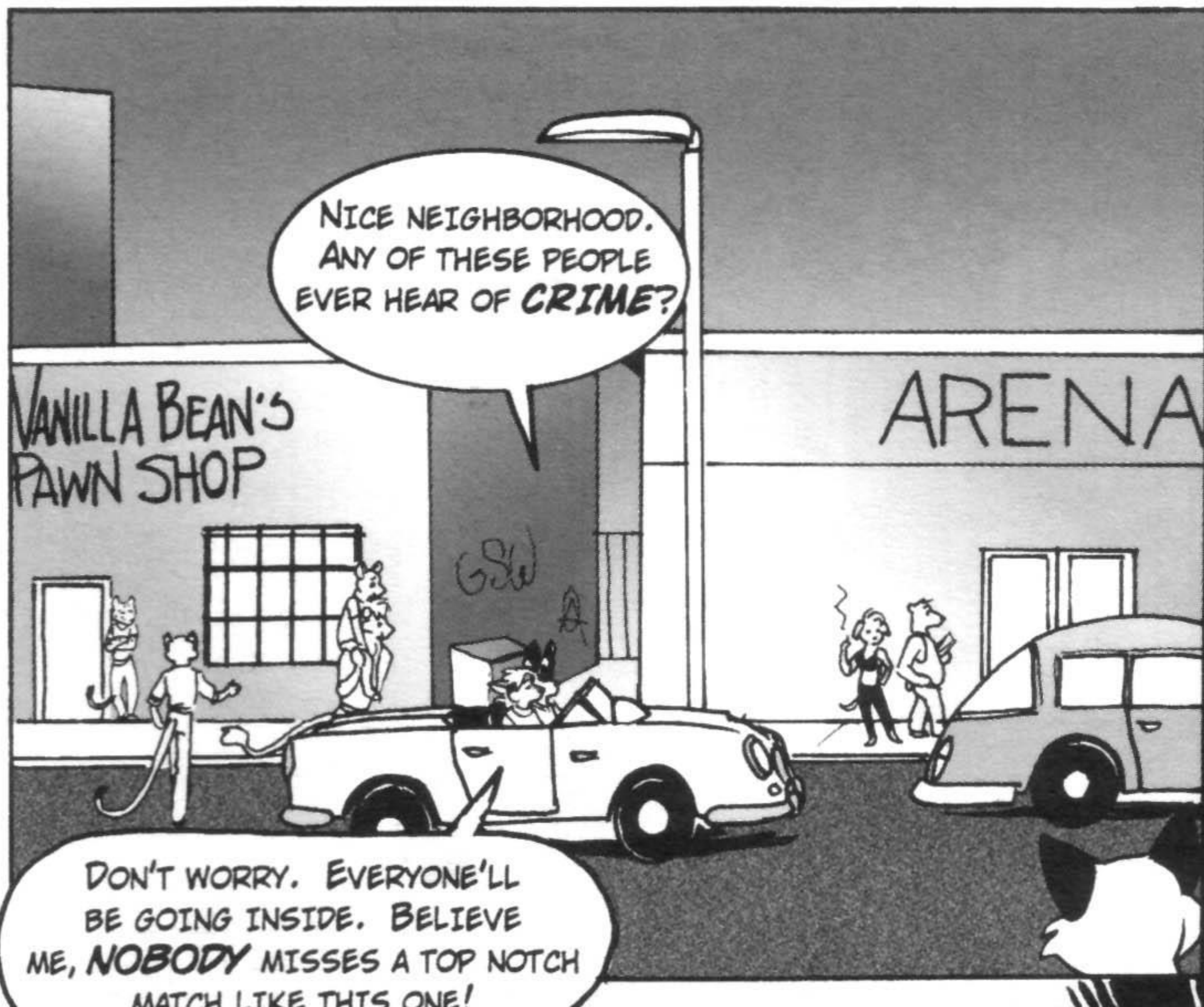
THOUGH HOW YOU CAN BE INTERESTED IN A MUSCLE BOUND LUNK LIKE **THAT**...!

<SNORT> YOU SHOULD TALK! ANYWAY, THE ATOMIC DRAGON'S MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER WRESTLER. HE'S A LEGEND. **NOBODY'S** BETTER AT A *GRAN TORNILLO. AND HIS FINISHING MOVE...

HEY, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A GOOD TIME, IN SPITE OF YOURSELF! RELAX!

WE'LL SEE.

* A FLYING BODYPRESS WITH A BODY TWIST



JUST SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE ATMOSPHERE!



MAYBE THIS ISN'T SUCH A GOOD IDEA, CHRIS...



RELAX!



IN AND OUT. WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

DRESSING ROOMS
→



AHHH, I JUST KEEP GETTING STRONGER EVERY DAY! I TELL YOU, ARTURO, TONIGHT'S MATCH WILL BE A GLORIOUS MASSACRE!

MAYBE SO, BUT CAN WE MAKE IT A **LITTLE** MASSACRE? ELECTRICO IS FEELING QUEASY TONIGHT AND WANTED ME TO ASK IF YOU COULD HOLD BACK A LITTLE.



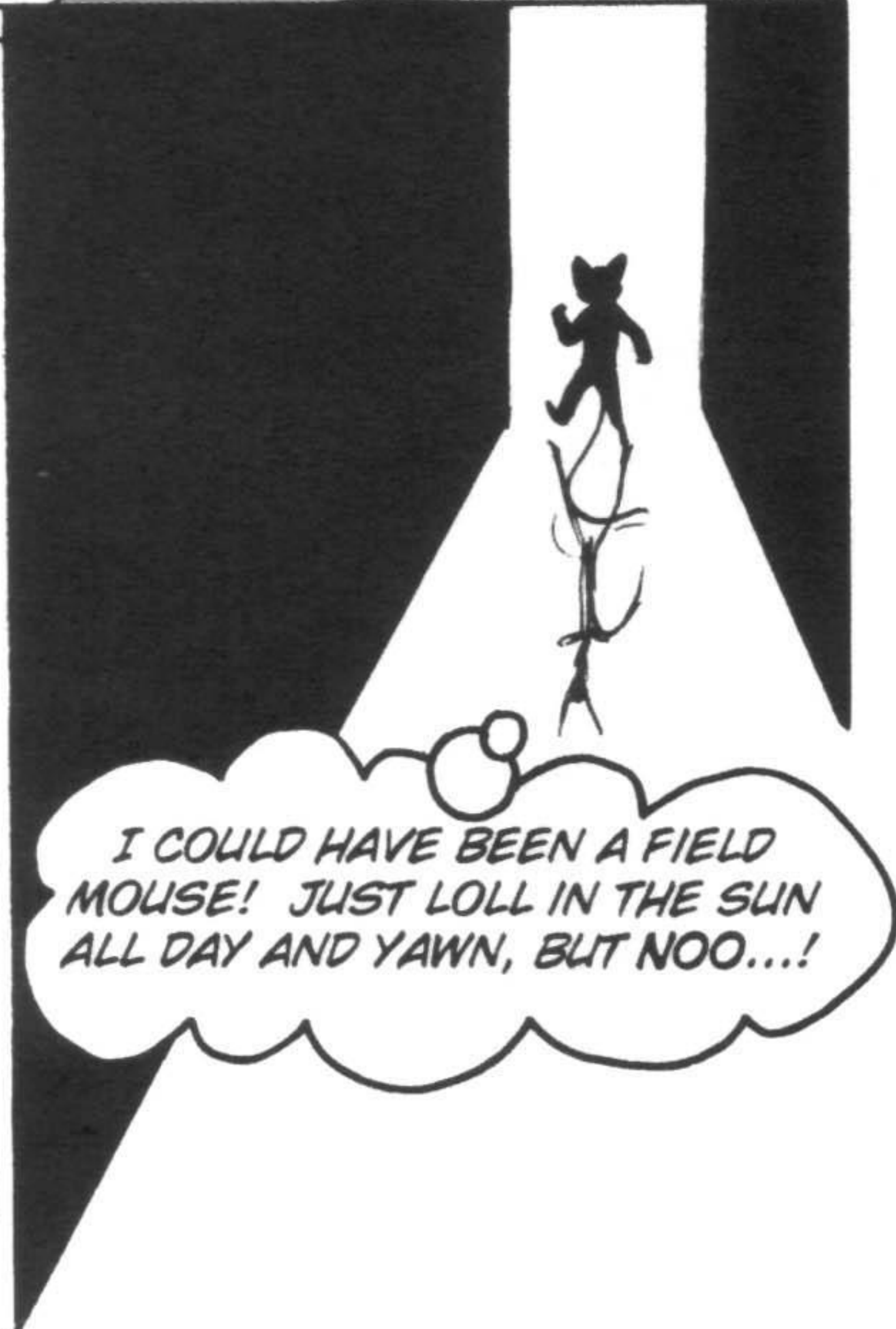
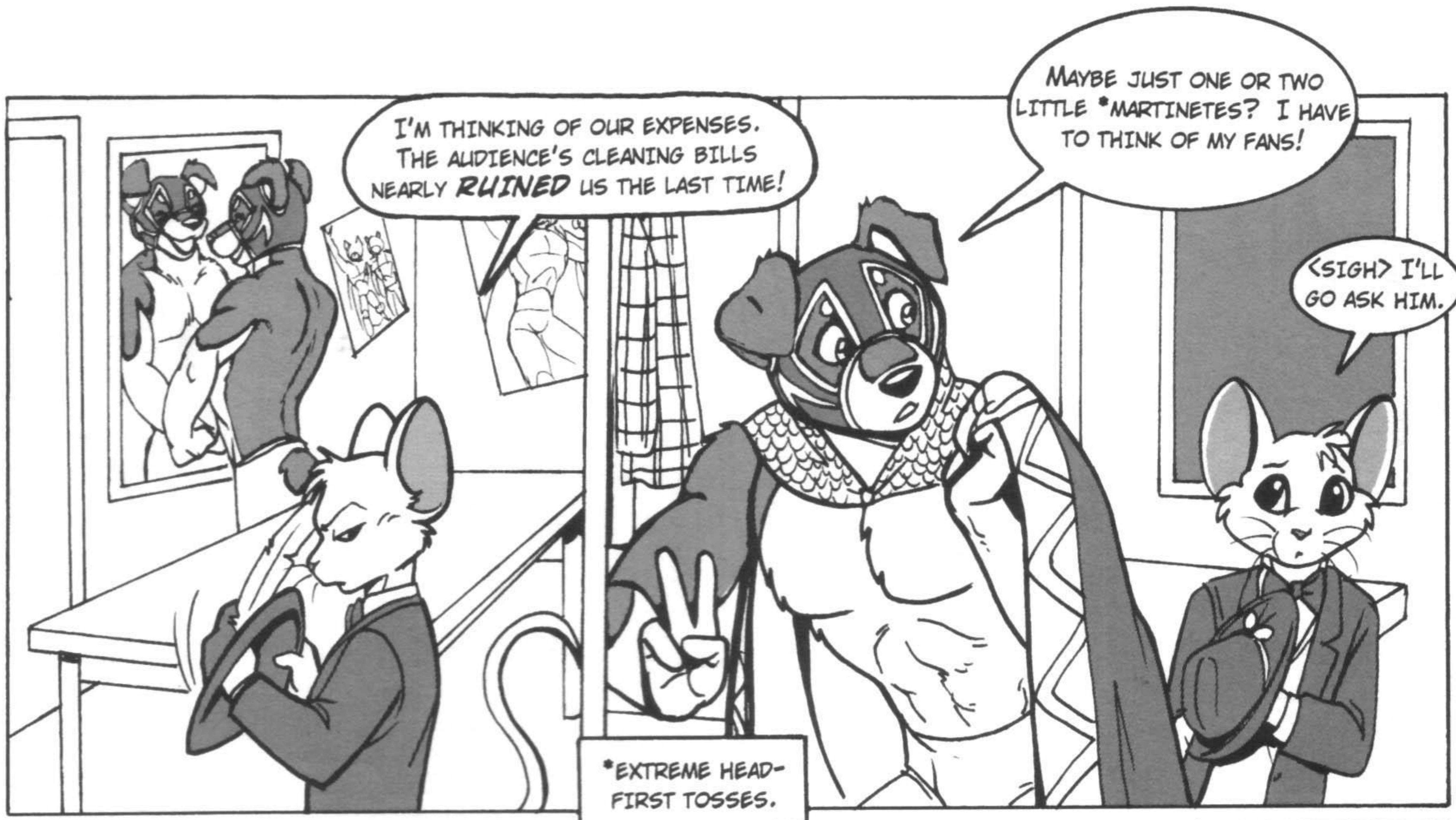
IT'S THAT SECOND STOMACH PROBLEM OF HIS, ISN'T IT?



I KEEP **TELLING** HIM TO CUT BACK ON SPICY FOOD BEFORE A MATCH.

LITTLE ARTURO. ALWAYS WATCHING OUT FOR THE OTHER FELLOW, EH?







CONGRATULATIONS, SPORT.
I THINK THAT MAKES YOU THE
NEW CHAMP, BY A KNOCKOUT.

WHAT WAS THAT LITTLE SPEECH
ABOUT THE UNIVERSE GIVING
US A NIGHT OFF?

ATOMIC
DRAGON

NONONONNONO...

COME ON! M-MAYBE
IT ISN'T ALL THAT BAD!
MAYBE HE JUST TRIPPED
OR SOMETHING!

THERE GOES
YOUR AUTOGRAPH.

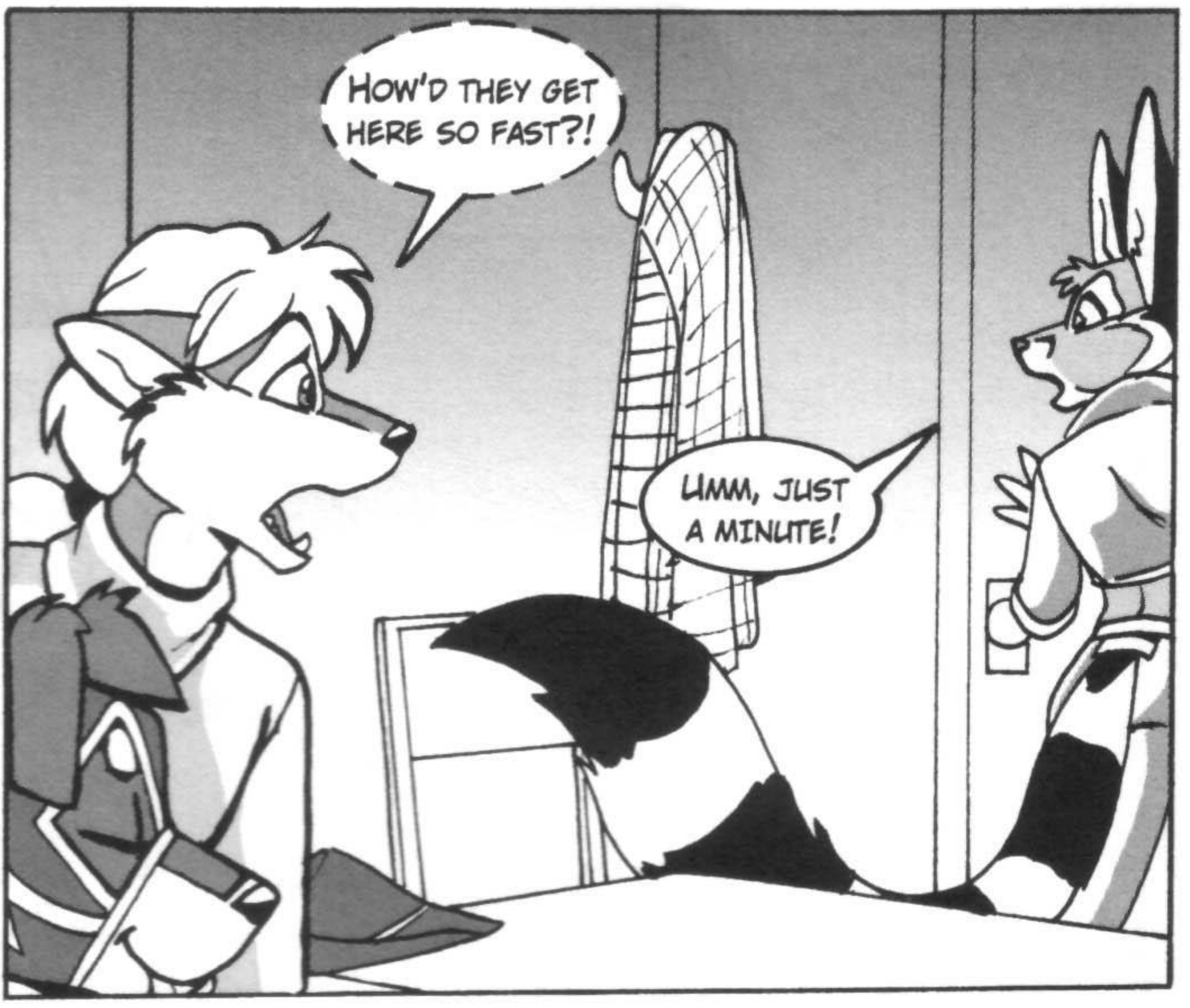
OH, MAN. HE'S OUT
LIKE A LIGHT!

HELP ME WITH HIM.
MAYBE WE CAN REVIVE HIM
AND GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE HE
FIGURES OUT WHAT HAPPENED.

OW! MY ACHING **BACK!**
HE WEIGHS A **TON!**

STAY CALM AND
LOOK FOR A GLASS OF
WATER OR SOME...

KNOCK-
KNOCK!



IN THAT MASK, NOBODY'LL KNOW THE DIFFERENCE. JUST TRY TO LOOK BULKY!

CHESTER, THIS IS NOT GOING TO WORK!

Y-YES?

OMIC
AGON

AH, DRAGON!
HOW GOOD OF YOU
TO SEE US ON SUCH
SHORT NOTICE!

I CAN EXPLAIN
EVERYTHING! IT WAS
AN ACCIDENT! WE...

WE WERE JUST
STRAIGHTENING UP
FOR COMPANY. ISN'T THAT
RIGHT, **DRAGON**?

AND **THIS** MUST BE LITTLE
ARTURO, YOUR MANAGER!
ANOTHER CELEBRITY! HOW
VERY **LUCKY** WE ARE!





WHAT IF HE'S NOT AS THICK AS THEY SAY? HE COULD REFUSE THE CHIEF!

OH, COME ON! THE MAN FIGHTS MONSTERS! HOW BRIGHT IS *THAT*? BESIDES, THERE'S THE LITTLE MATTER OF 40 UNPAID TRAFFIC TICKETS...



ER, "DRAGON"? CAN WE DISCUSS THIS IN THE HALLWAY? IT'S GETTING **STUFFY** IN HERE!

OHhhh!



FINE! FINE! THEN YOU WILL HELP US! SANCHEZ, GRAB THE DRAGON'S **BEAUTIFUL** JACKET!

BUT... BUT...



WE'VE PREPARED A SPECIAL HEADQUARTERS FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE USE! WE'LL GO THERE NOW!



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

ATOMIC DRAGON

MY PLEASURE.

POLICE BUSINESS! THE DRAGON IS COMING WITH US!

GREAT! WONDERFUL! **WHY** DOESN'T ANYONE TELL ME THESE THINGS? OKAY, SOMEBODY WARM UP THE REPLACEMENT WRESTLER!



SO FAR WE HAVE NO CLEAR LEADS. DR. CAPRUCAL, A LOCAL SCIENTIST, HAS OFFERED HIS HELP.



YOU'LL MEET HIM LATER. NOW, WE'D BETTER GET STARTED.



AFTER YOU SETTLE IN, I'LL ASSIGN YOU A CAR AND DRIVER. YOU CAN GET STARTED AT ONCE.



WHAT'LL WE DO?



BUT THE CAR!

RELAX! WE CAN SEND FOR IT.



HERE WE ARE, DRAGON! THIS IS THE OLD POLICE GARAGE. BUT...

ONCE WE'RE ALONE, I **DITCH** THIS MASK! THEN WE'RE JUST PASSING FACES IN THE CROWD. HOPEFULLY!



...WE'VE FIXED IT UP JUST FOR YOU!



SEE? A CRIME FIGHTING LAIR ANYONE WOULD BE **PROUD** OF!

ER, RIIIIIGHT.

FROM HERE YOU CAN **SWOOP** DOWN ON THE MONSTER MAKER, THWARTING HIS WICKED SCHEMES.



THE CASE FILES ARE ON YOUR DESK. I'LL HAVE THE CAR HERE IN A FEW MINUTES. I **KNOW** YOU'LL WANT TO GET STARTED RIGHT AWAY.



PLEASE TRY TO GET IT DONE TONIGHT. WE'RE ON A DEADLINE.

IS HE SERIOUS?

I DON'T KNOW. THE DRAGON'S MADE A FEW MOVIES IN WHICH HE **DID** FIGHT MONSTERS. MAYBE THIS RUBE THINKS THEY'RE REAL OR SOMETHING.



WHAT...?

SHH! I HEARD SOMETHING BACK THERE!



YOU'RE SURE?

YES.





WHO'S THERE?



EH? YES.
YES, OF COURSE.



I WOULD HAVE INTRODUCED MYSELF, BUT I HATED TO INTERRUPT YOU. I ARRIVED EARLY, YOU SEE.



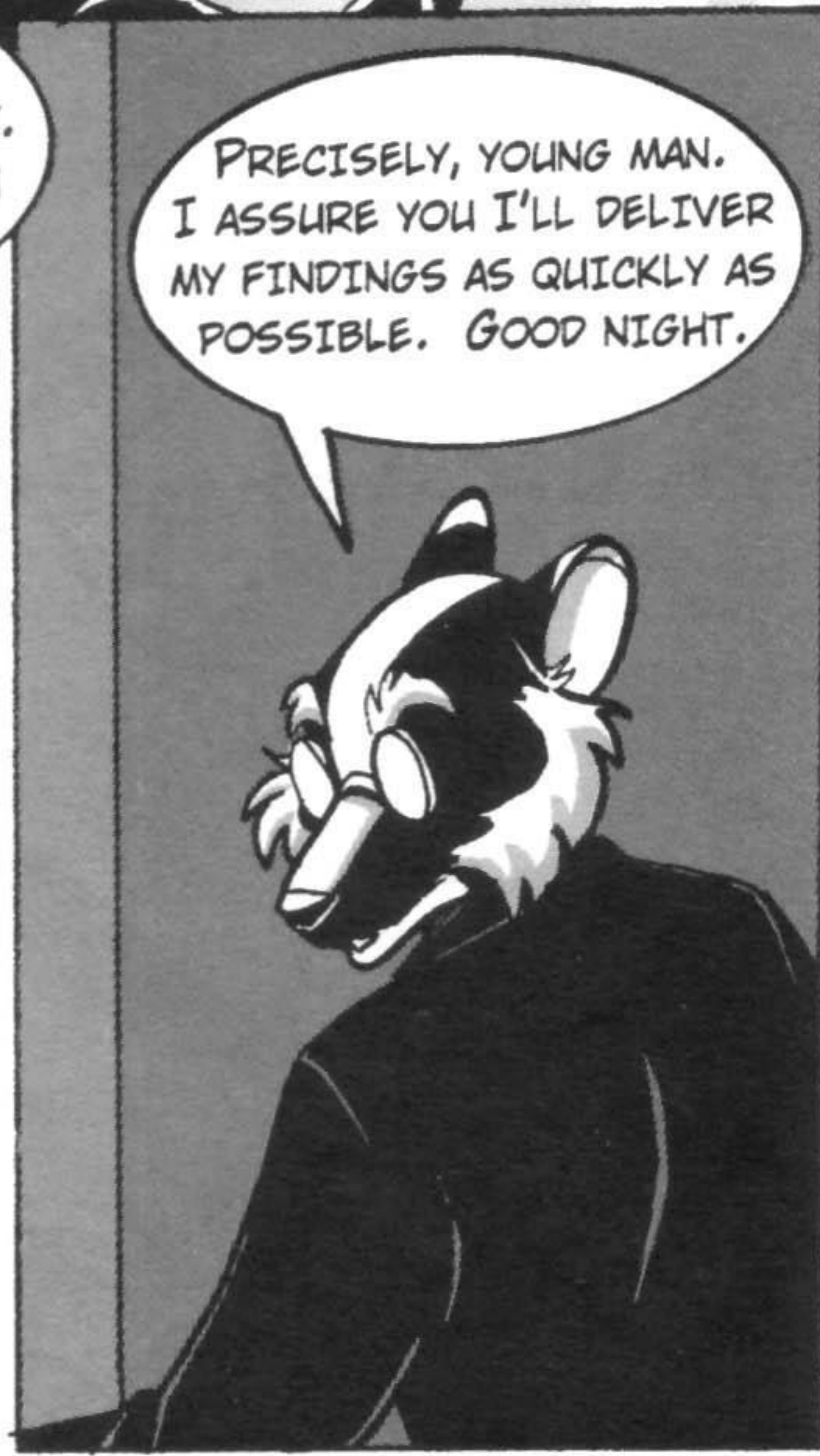
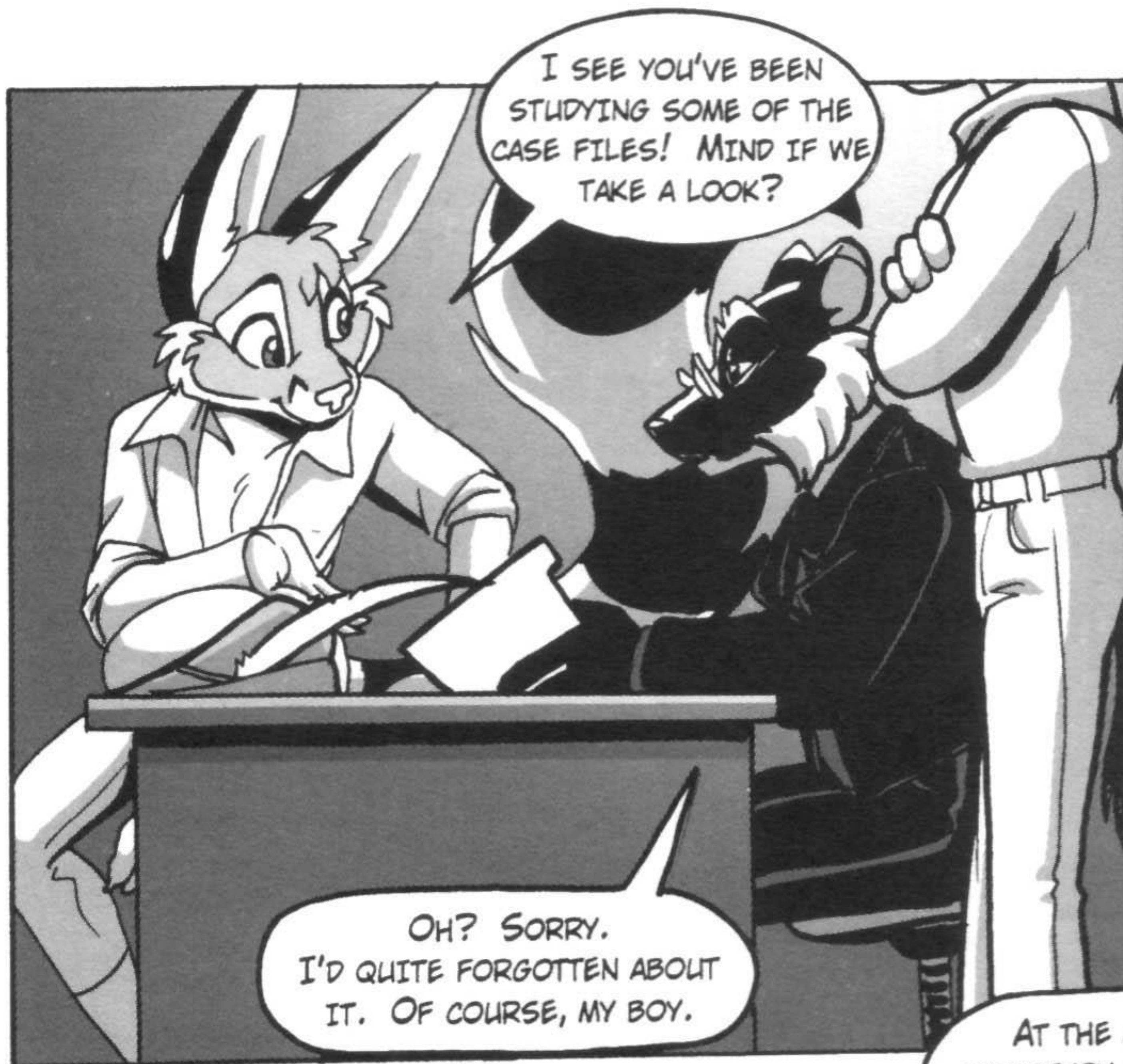
THE CHIEF MAY HAVE MENTIONED ME. I AM DR. CAPRICAL.

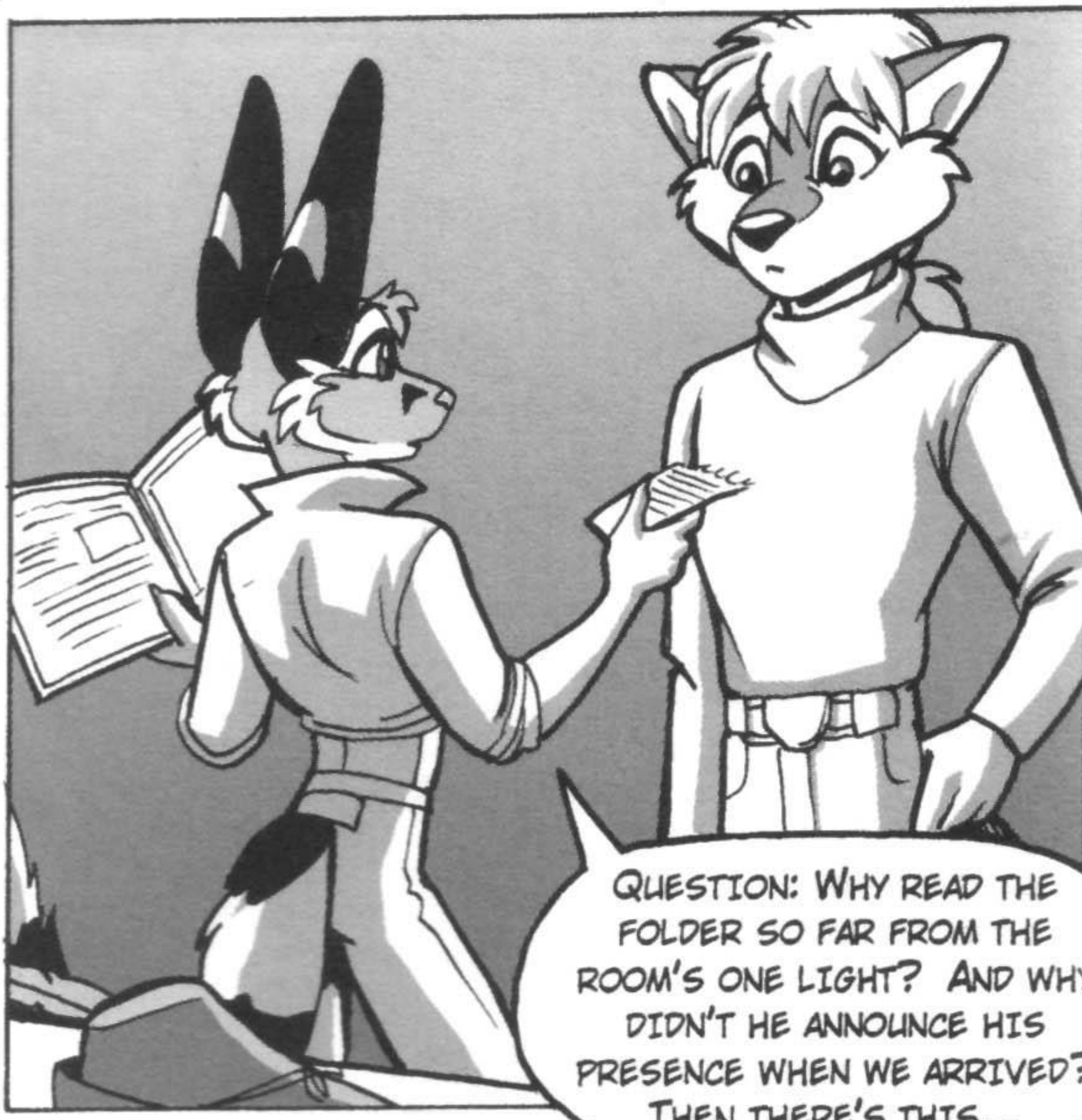


AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE DID MENTION YOU WERE HELPING ON THE CASE.

WELL, WE ALL DO WHAT WE CAN, YOUNG MAN.

THOUGH IN THIS CASE, I MUST ADMIT THAT I FAIL TO SEE WHAT THE AUTHORITIES CAN DO. MONSTERS, AFTER ALL...

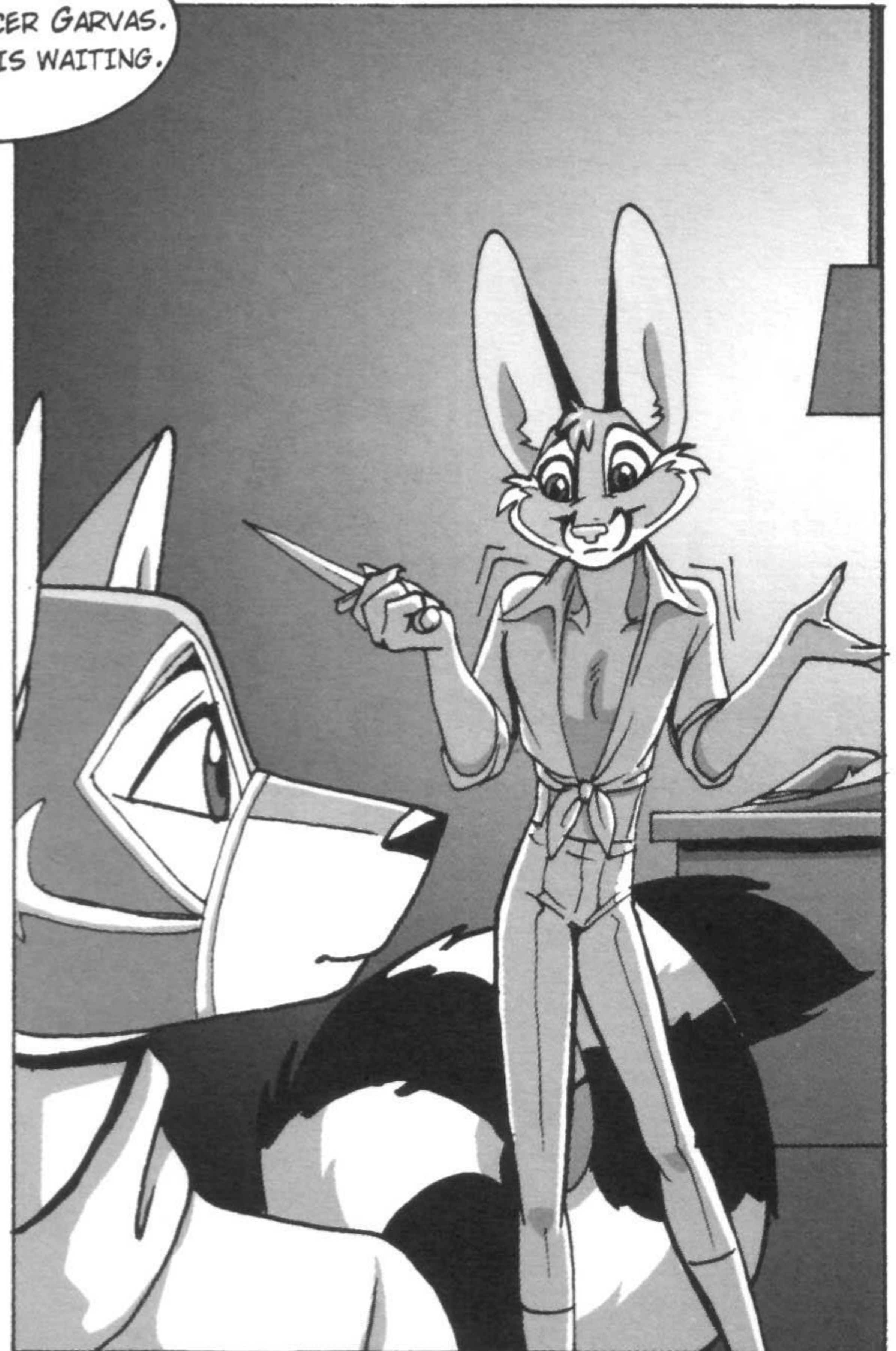








I AM OFFICER GARVAS.
YOUR CAR IS WAITING.



WELL, IT'S RATHER LATE.
I DON'T THINK WE'LL NEED
YOU TONIGHT. HOW ABOUT WE
CALL YOU IN THE MORNING?



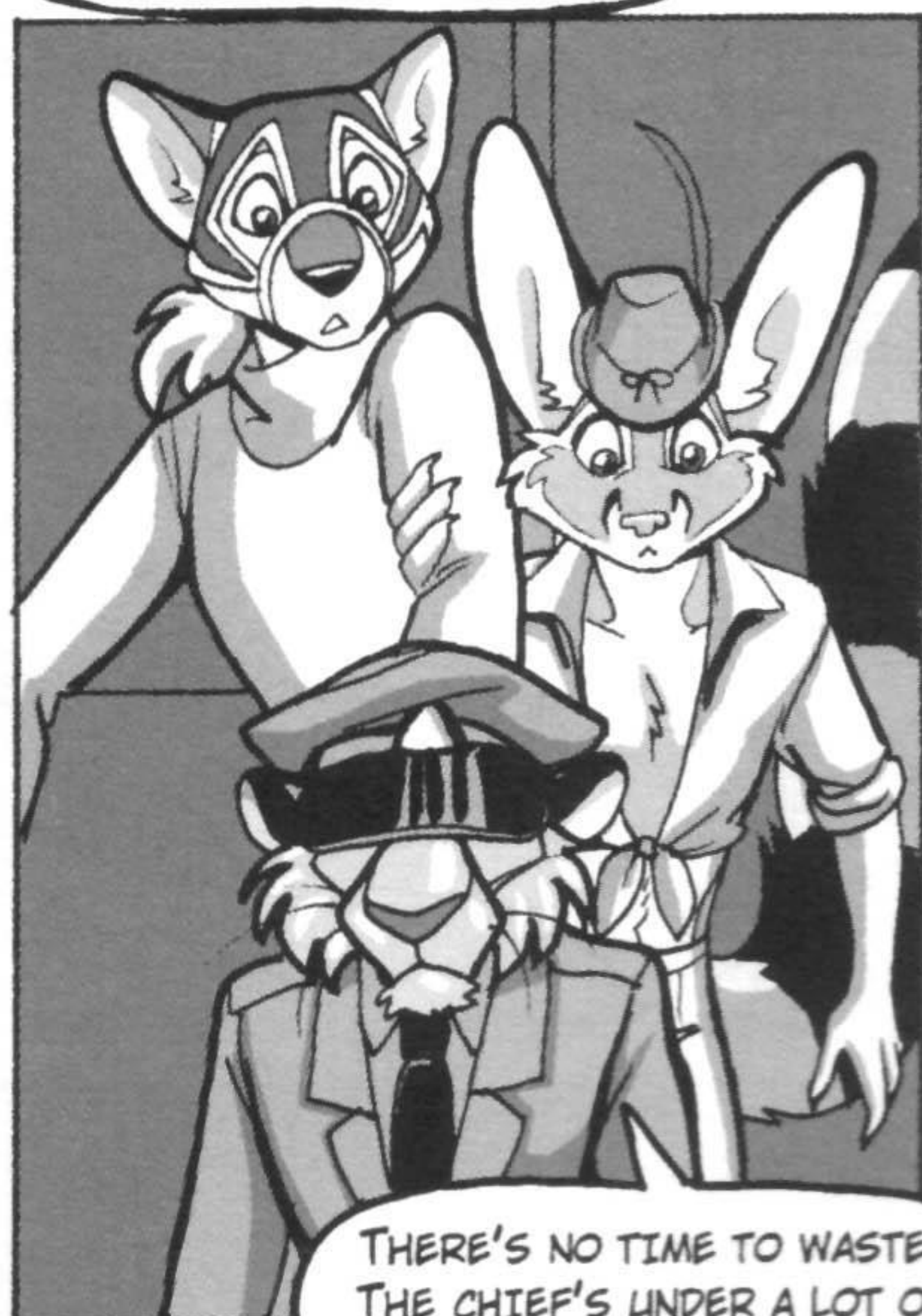


MAYBE WE'D BETTER
CONCENTRATE ON LOCATING
THEM DURING THE **DAY**...

...WHEN
THEY'RE DORMANT.

COME ON, HERO.
THIS MIGHT BE OUR BIG
CHANCE TO SNEAK AWAY!

DR. CAPRICAL GAVE US THE
ADDRESS OF AN OLD FACTORY
OUTSIDE THE CITY, WHERE THE
MONSTERS HAVE BEEN SIGHTED. THE
BEASTS ONLY COME OUT AT NIGHT,
SO WE'D BETTER GET GOING.



THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE.
THE CHIEF'S UNDER A LOT OF
PRESSURE FROM THE MAYOR.



TWO OF THE BEASTS
CORNERED THE MAYOR'S WIFE
FOR NEARLY AN HOUR.

WAS SHE
BADLY HURT?



NO, THEY JUST WHEELED
HER RELENTLESSLY FOR A
HANDOUT. WHEN YOU'RE
RICH, YOU DON'T LIKE
TO HEAR SUCH THINGS.



SHE'S STILL
IN THERAPY.



STANDARD
ISSUE?

MY OWN AUTO. WHEN
IT COMES TO MONSTERS, I
LIKE SOMETHING WITH A LITTLE
PICK-UP TO IT. JUST IN CASE.

MAKES
SENSE.

YOU MENTIONED
A FACTORY?

OUT ON THE OLD
MOONLIGHT ROAD. SINCE
THEY REROUTED THE HIGHWAY,
NOBODY GOES WITHIN MILES
OF THE PLACE.

WATCH IT,
'ARTURO'!

MUCH OF THE FACTORY WAS
DESTROYED A FEW YEARS AGO
IN A FIRE. THERE'VE BEEN
REPORTS OF LIGHTS IN THE
RUINS. THAT'S WHAT YOU'LL
BE INVESTIGATING.

WHOA!

HOW DO WE GET BACK
TO THE SPACEPORT **NOW**?

IF THE MONSTERS
ARE THERE, THEY SHOULD
BE EASY TO FIND. JUST
MAKE A LOT OF NOISE.

WE LOOK AROUND FOR A
FEW MINUTES, NOT FIND
ANYTHING, AND MAKE AN
EXCUSE TO GET BACK TO
HQ AND DITCH GARVAS.

I JUST HOPE WE
DON'T FIND ANYTHING!

WE'RE HERE.
GOOD HUNTING.

WE'RE NEARLY THERE.
I'LL WAIT AT THE GATE,
WHILE YOU GO IN.



YOU KNOW, THREE OF US COULD FINISH THE SEARCH IN LESS TIME THAN TWO.

I'M NOT LEAVING MY CAR UNATTENDED, WITH INSANE MONSTERS ON THE LOOSE. **YOU'RE** THE HERO!

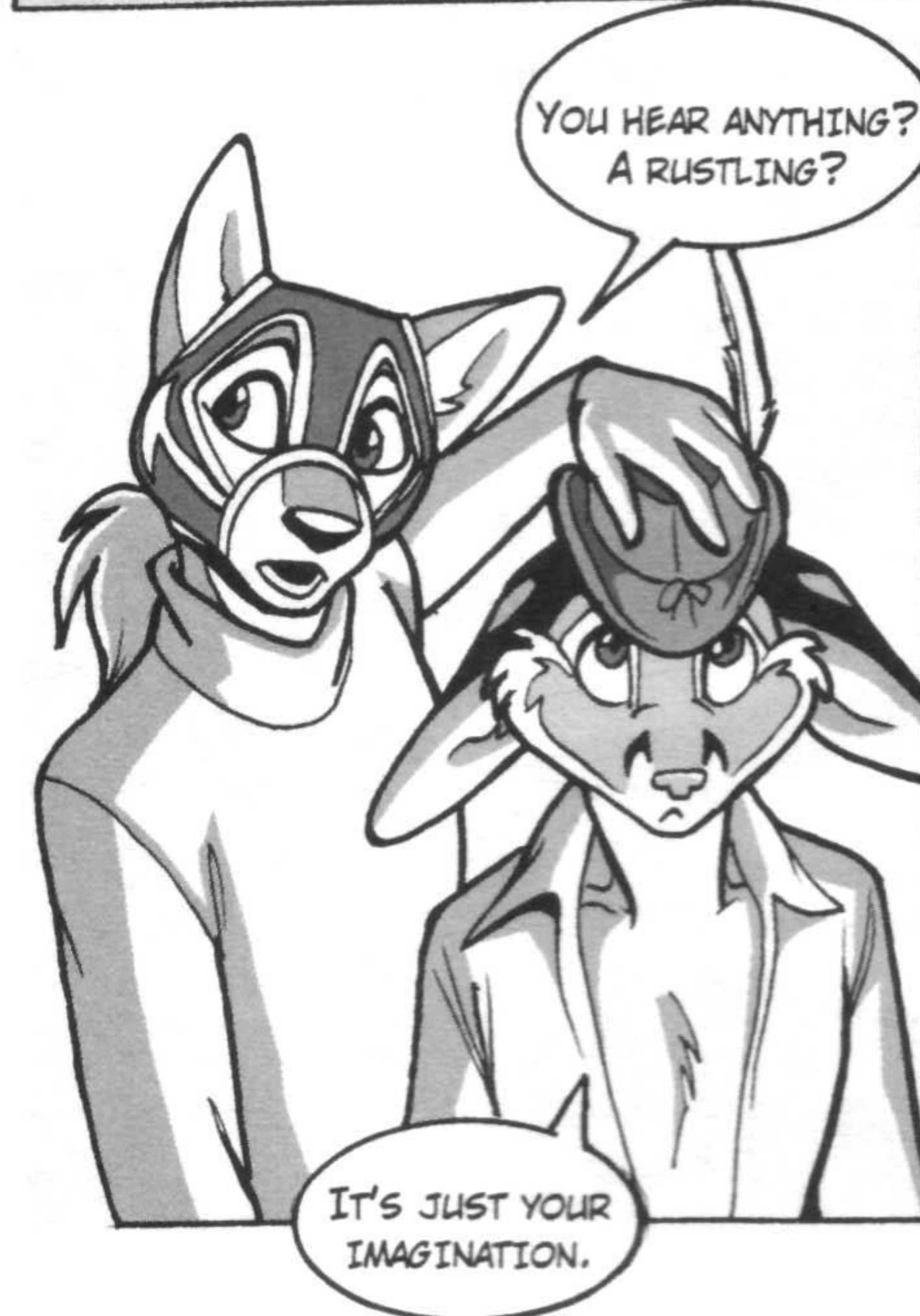
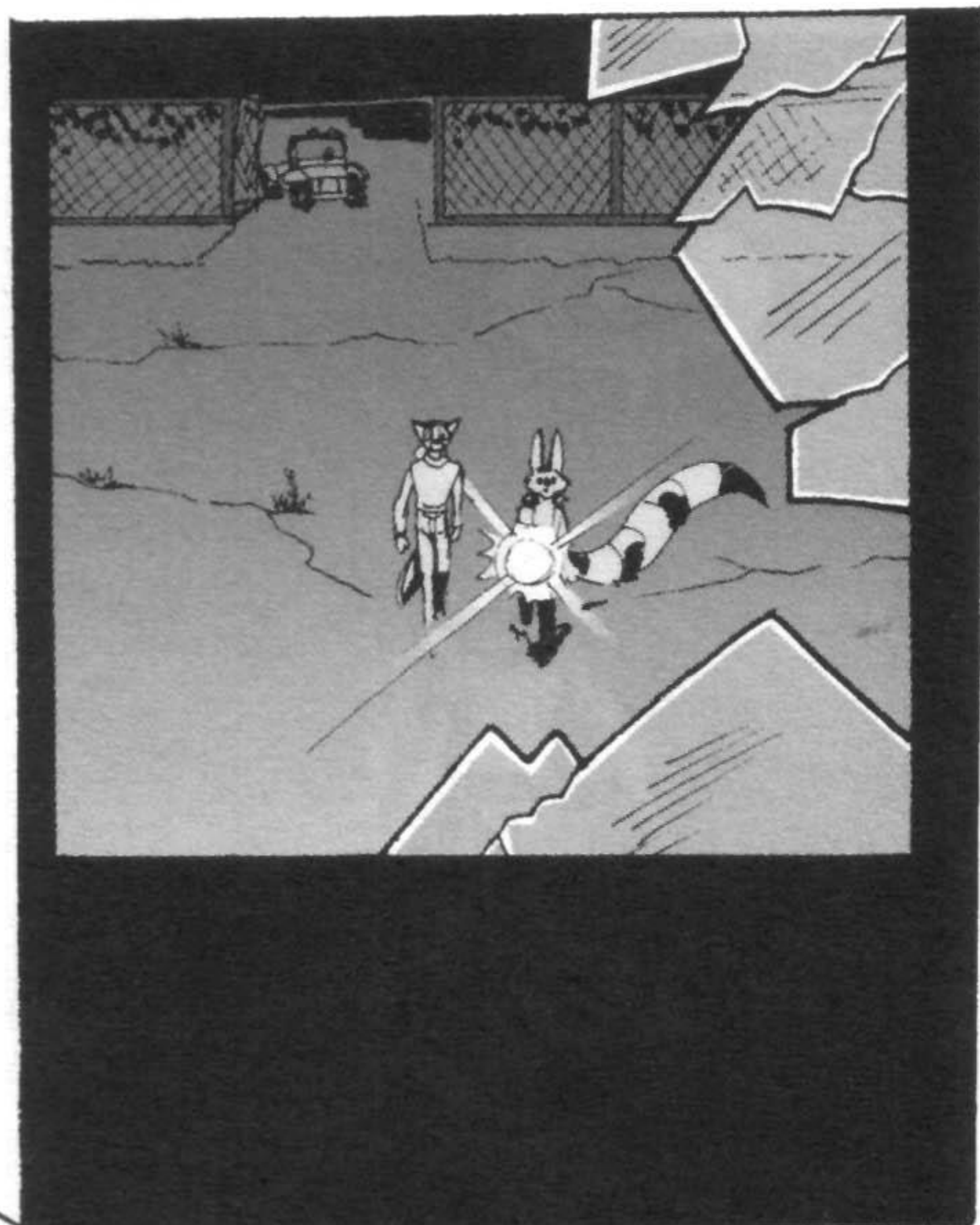


I'LL BE HERE IF YOU NEED ME.



MMM.

COME ON, DRAGON! THE SOONER WE CHECK THE PLACE OUT, THE SOONER WE CAN GET BACK TO TOWN.



YOU HEAR ANYTHING? A RUSTLING?

IT'S JUST YOUR IMAGINATION.



MAYBE, BUT I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF OUR WANDERING AROUND INSIDE THAT FACTORY.

RELAX. I'VE GOT THAT PLANNED.

WE JUST TURN THE
LIGHT OFF FOR A FEW MINUTES,
SO GARVAS **THINKS** WE'RE INSIDE.
THEN WE HEAD BACK. BESIDES,
IT'S PROBABLY LOCKED TIGHT.



GUESS AGAIN.
THE DOOR'S NOT
EVEN CLOSED.



THAT'S
STRANGE.



HERE'S SOMETHING
EVEN STRANGER, CHRIS.



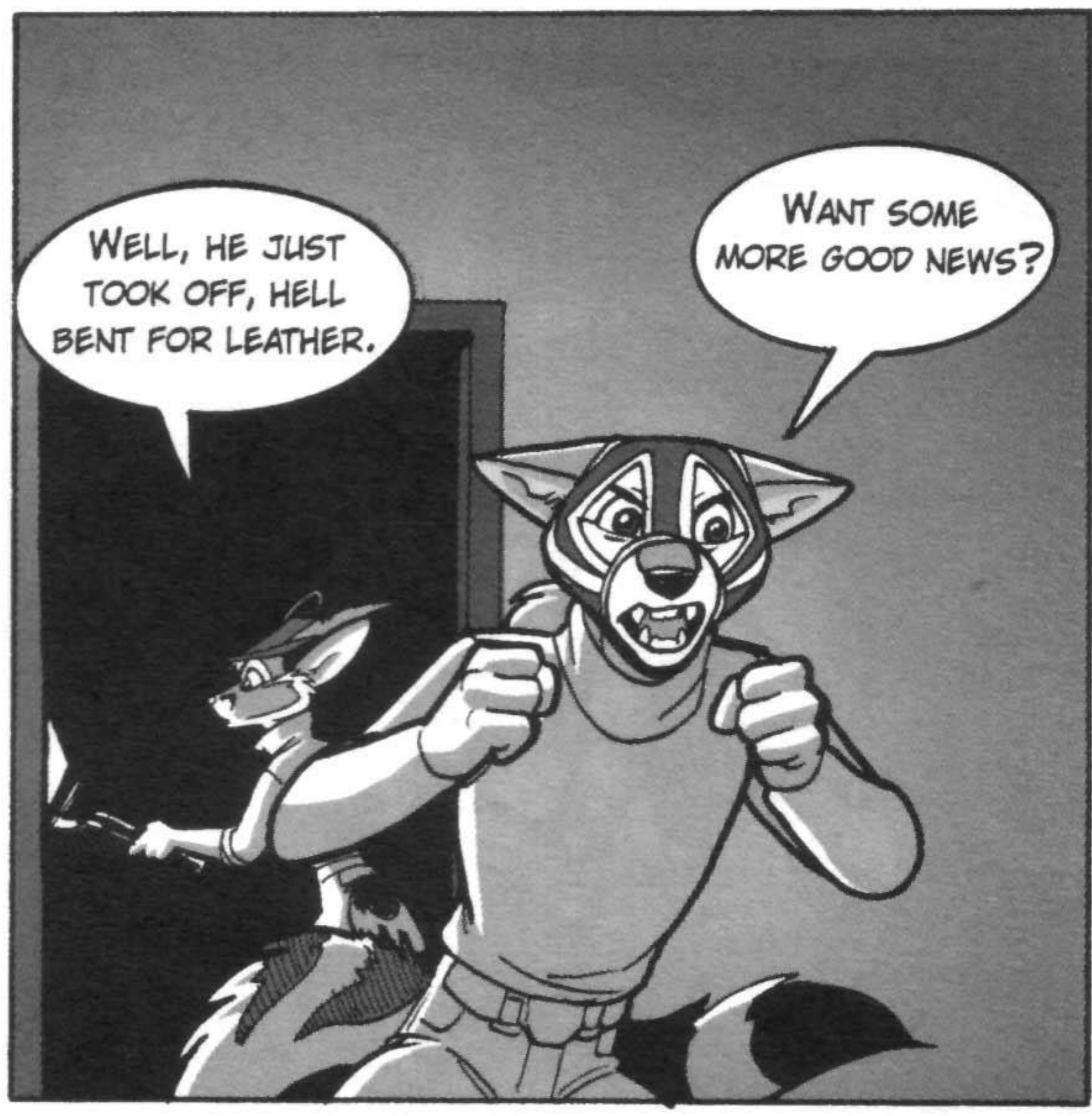
SOMEBODY'S BEEN
HERE RECENTLY. SOMEBODY
BAREFOOTED.

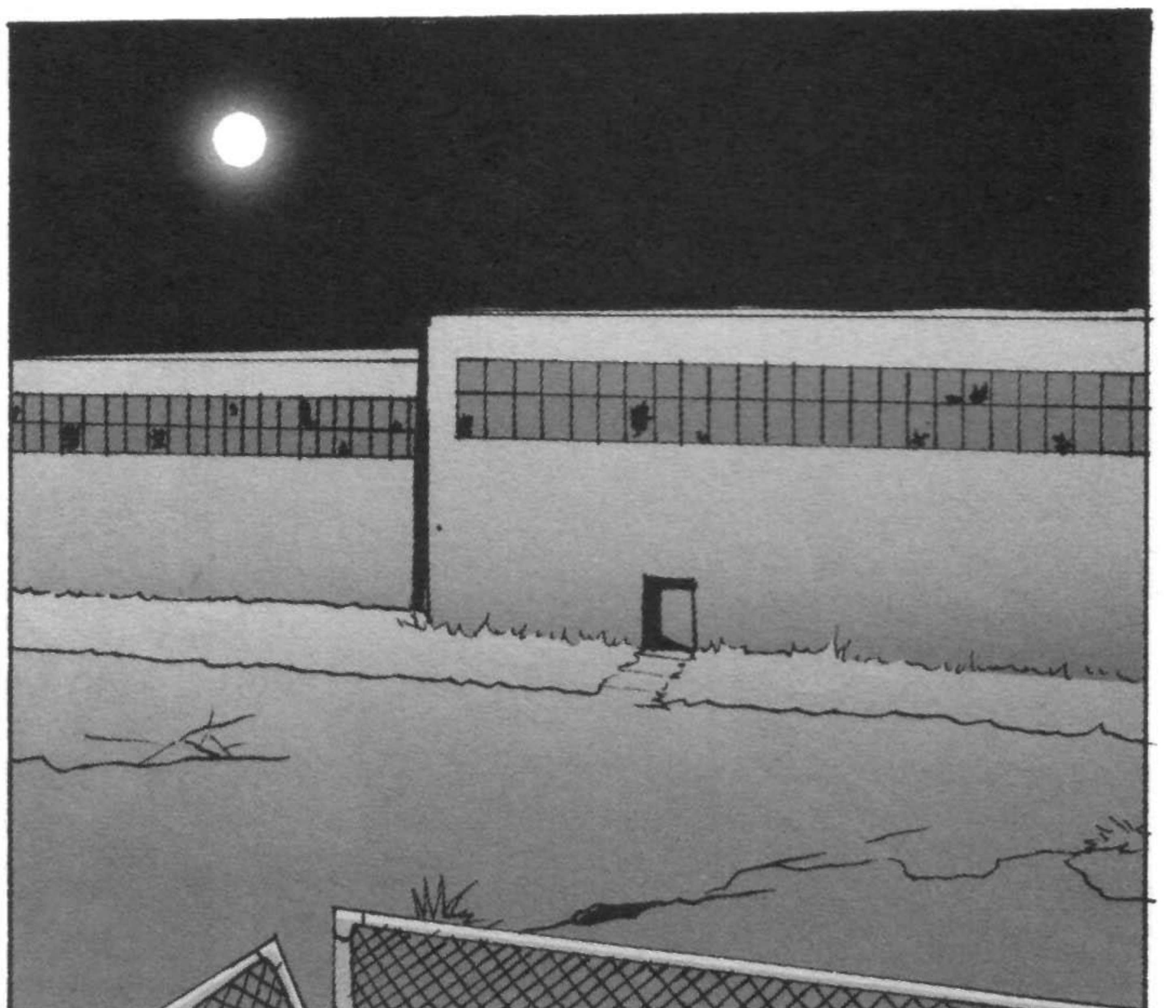


SEE
ANYTHING?

NO, BUT THAT
DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING
IN THIS DARKNESS.







OHHHHH...

AH, YOU'RE
AWAKE! GOOD.

WELCOME TO MY HUMBLE WORKSHOP.
IT USED TO BE A BUSY FACTORY BUT
WHEN THE FIRM CLOSED, THE EQUIPMENT
WAS REMOVED. ALL BUT THIS HYDRAULIC
DRIVER. A HANDY TOOL...IN CERTAIN
CIRCUMSTANCES.

WHOOOM!!!

WHAA...?!?

WHEN THE RAILROAD TIE ABOVE YOU
SPLINTERS THROUGH, THE FULL WEIG
OF THE DRIVER WILL CRUSH YOU. I'
PREFER YOUR BEING OUT OF THE WA
BEFORE I LAUNCH MY MAIN ATTACK O
THE CITY. IT'S SO MUCH NEATER.

GOODBYE.

CHRIS, CAN'T YOU
DO ANYTHING?

CREAK...

WHOOOM!!!

YOU'D BETTER
HURRY!

IF I CAN ONLY **BEND**
THE FRAME! BLOCK THE
DRIVER! IT MIGHT SHAKE
THE MECHANISM APART!

CHRIS! THE
TIE'S GIVING!

IF YOU'RE GOING
TO DO SOMETHING, YOU'D
BETTER DO IT NOW!

CRACK!!

WHOOOM!

I'M...
TRYING!!



CHRIS!

WHOOOM!!

CREAK~

HOLD ON! SOMETHING'S... STARTING TO *GIVE*!



CREEEEEEAAKKKKKKKKKKKK... SNAP!

YOU DID IT!

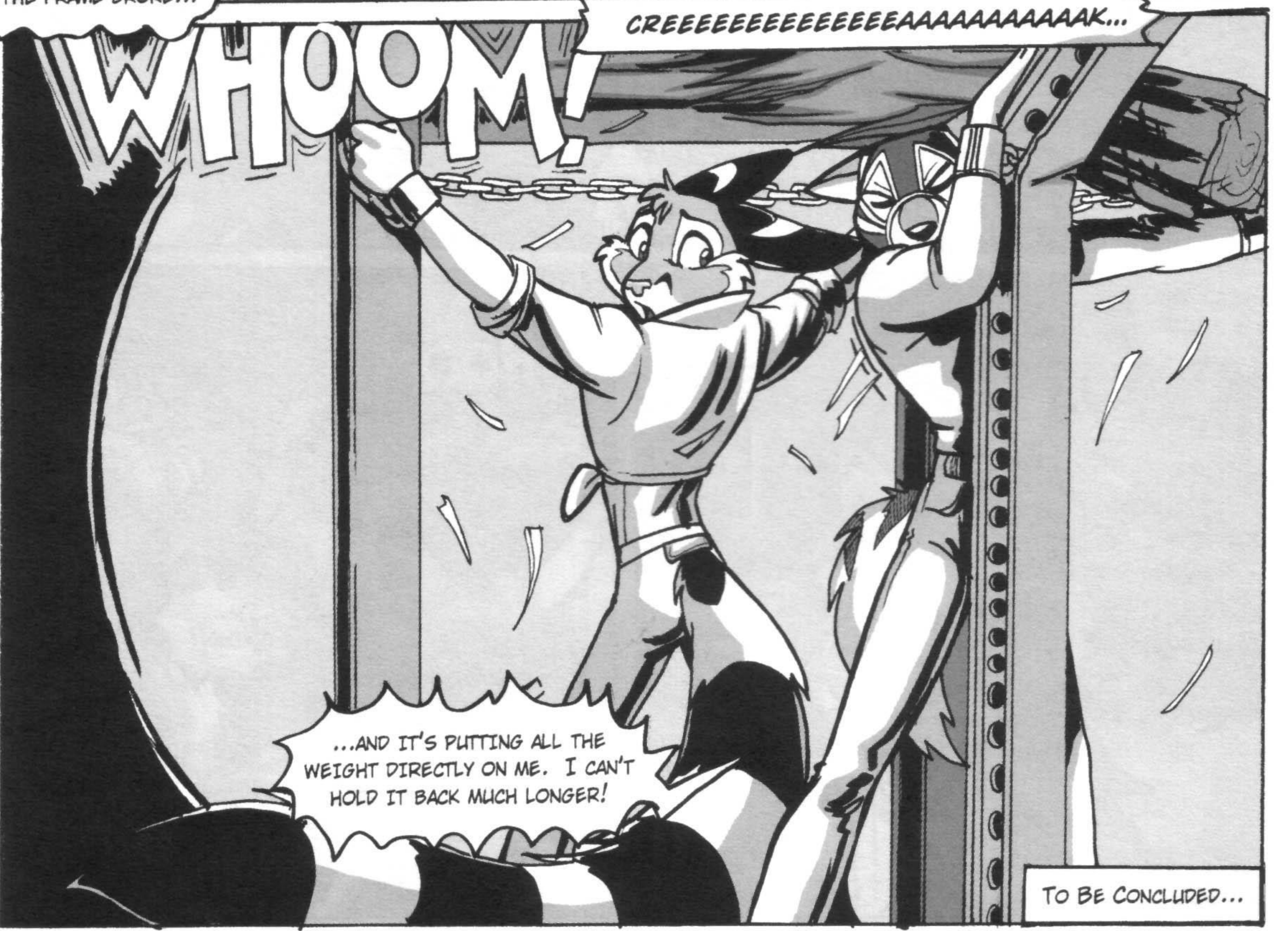
No!



ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE FRAME BROKE...



THE DRIVER IS STILL COMING DOWN...



CREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAAK...

WHOOOM!

...AND IT'S PUTTING ALL THE WEIGHT DIRECTLY ON ME. I CAN'T HOLD IT BACK MUCH LONGER!

TO BE CONCLUDED...